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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED)

Subject: Consequences of US Military Intervention
in Cuba (TS)

1. On 2 August 1962 the Chief of Operations, Operation MONGOOSE, requested the DOD/JCS Representative, Operation MONGOOSE, to prepare a paper for distribution to the Special Group (Augmented) on 8 August 1962. The specific requirement is to set forth "Consequences of (US) Military Intervention (in Cuba) to include cost (personnel, units and equipment), effect on world-wide ability to react, possibility of a requirement for sustained occupation, the level of national mobilization required, and Cuban counteraction." Pursuant to this request, the requirement has been divided into its separate parts.

2. Requirements (personnel, units and equipment)

a. In order to seize control of key strategic areas in Cuba within [10-15] days with minimum casualties to both sides about [261,000] US military personnel would participate in the operation.

21

b. About [71,000] Army and [35,000] Marine forces will be engaged on the ground within Cuba. In addition, approximately [29,000] Army troops will be available as on-call forces.

21

b1

TS 21

21

c. Major units involved in the initial assault include:

Two Army airborne divisions, an infantry brigade, and an armored combat command; one and one-third Marine division/wing teams; a Navy Striking and Covering force together with an amphibious task force; and 17 USAF tactical fighter squadrons and 53 troop carrier or transport squadrons.

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d. Principal equipment includes:

(1) Army - Artillery units and armor (including about 275 tanks.)

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(2) Marines - Artillery units and armor (including about 85 tanks), plus some 320 supporting aircraft. JCS 16,21

(3) Navy - Approximately 175-200 ships, including two aircraft carriers with approximately 180 aircraft embarked. 16,21

(4) Air Force - About 490 troop carriers and transports, 312 tactical fighters, and 65 reconnaissance and refuelling aircraft. 16,21

3. Level of National Mobilization Required.

a. Army - None. In lieu of mobilizing Civil Affairs units from the active reserve, tactical forces, though not trained for this mission, will be employed to conduct Civil Affairs/Military Government operations.

b. Navy - For troop and cargo sealift, no rise in mobilization level would be required beyond the present authority held by the Maritime Administration to charter shipping.

c. Air Force - In order to land the maximum number of airborne troops in the minimum time, 16,21 Fourteen Air Force Reserve troop carrier squadrons (C-119) were originally included in the airlift plan; however, CINCLANT and USAF have been requested to prepare alternate plans not involving any mobilization prior to D-day.

d. Marines - None.

e. Further mobilization would be required if a concurrent political or military situation exists which would make such a precaution desirable in order to assure US military responsiveness to additional demands.

4. Effect on World-Wide Ability to React - The present basic contingency plan anticipates achieving control of key strategic areas in Cuba within JCS 16,21 10-15 days. Subsequent to gaining such control of the island there will be a progressive withdrawal of forces as the situation permits. 16,21

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a. When the assault forces have been committed to the Cuban operation, the strategic Army forces in CONUS would be short the supporting forces for the remaining five divisions. It is estimated that the Army Airborne two division force would be available for other operations [] 15-30 days after withdrawal from Cuba. Substantial Army forces from the on-call echelon will relieve the assault forces and remain on the island to perform counterguerrilla operations and conduct military government activities. This force will be progressively withdrawn as the new Cuban government increases in effectiveness. JCS 21

b. The Atlantic Fleet amphibious troop lift capability (less that deployed with the Sixth Fleet) will be engaged fully during the initial phase of the operation. There may be a requirement for amphibious lift for rapid redeployment and counterguerrilla activity until order has been restored. It is anticipated that most of these ships will be available for other commitments within approximately 30-45 days. About 40 to 50 per cent of the Pacific amphibious troop lift capability will be employed in the landings in the eastern end of Cuba. These ships would be available for other operations in the Pacific about 15 days after the withdrawal of the Pacific Marines from Cuba. In addition to the amphibious troop lift capability the initial requirements for sealift will include MSTS ships obtained through the Maritime Administration. Over-all requirements for shipping will diminish after the initial 10-20 days of the operation. JCS 21

c. It is estimated that combat-ready status of the Atlantic Command Marine division/wing team will be restored within 15 days of withdrawal; combat-readiness of the Pacific Command Marine expeditionary brigade within 30 days of withdrawal. JCS 21

d. For approximately ten days, CONUS MATS airlift would be fully committed. JCS 21

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e. CONAD air defense capabilities in southeast United States will be augmented by the additional Naval and Air Force forces brought into the area for this operation. Therefore, no redeployment of CONAD forces from other areas is anticipated.

5. Castro-Cuban Counteraction.

a. The military reaction will be determined in large measure by the will of the Cuban armed forces to resist, as well as by the weapons available to them and their proficiency in their use, at the time of US military intervention.

b. The military capabilities of Cuba are oriented primarily toward defensive activities. Cuban plans are believed to contemplate a strong initial resistance, followed by a determined defense of preselected keypoints, and finally by protracted guerrilla warfare.

c. Cuba has about 50 MIG fighters, some of which may be configured for carrying light bombs. Any of these that survive the US air strikes could be used offensively against targets in Florida. Also they have 11 B-26 aircraft some of which, if they survive the air strikes by US forces, could attempt to attack targets in the southeastern United States. All forces engaged in the operation, as well as the Continental Air Defense forces, however, would be alert to guard against any such attempts at retaliation.

d. In the future the Castro-Cuban capability for counteraction will improve if Soviet's continue to provide the Cubans with additional military equipment and training. Thus, the urgency of the requirement to remove the Communist government from Cuba is made apparent by Castro's constantly increasing capabilities.

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6. Possibility of a Requirement for a Sustained Occupation.

a. The duration of a US military presence in Cuba is contingent upon such factors as the will of Castro-Cuban forces to resist invasion, the degree of popular support a defeated Castro might receive for the conduct of residual guerrilla operations, and time required to reconstitute an effective friendly Cuban government.

b. Following the establishment of essential military control of the island, a substantial US military commitment may be required in Cuba for a significant period of time. Post assault tasks will include restoration of law and order and the conduct of counterguerrilla operations.

c. To achieve the objectives of subparagraph b above, it is planned that the post assault military presence initially will consist of substantial Army follow-on forces with such other sea and air support as may be required. This will be reduced gradually in size as the effectiveness of the new Cuban government increases. Thereafter, a lengthy period of providing military assistance is anticipated.

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